

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 19, 2004. Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 15, 16, 26 and 27 are presented for examination. Claims 1, 6, 15, and 26 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Claims 1, 6, and 15 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 15, 16, 26, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,579,126 (*Otsuka*), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,166,826 (*Yokoyama*).

As shown above, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 6, and 15 in terms that more clearly define what he regards as his invention. Applicant submits that these amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is an image reading apparatus, connected to a plurality of image forming apparatuses via a network, for transmitting an image signal representing an image that has been read to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses. The apparatus includes generation means, selection means, determination means, input means, transmitting means, reception means, and control means. The generation means generates an image signal on the basis of reading the image. The selection means selects one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses for receipt of the generated image signal. The determination means determines whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user. The input means inputs the management information in

accordance with a result of the determination by the determination means, and the transmitting means transmits the inputted management information to the selected image forming apparatus. The reception means receives a result of authenticating the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus, and the control means controls transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Among other notable features of Claim 1 are (a) that the input means inputs the management information in accordance with a result of the determination by the determination means where the determination means determines whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user, and (b) that the control means controls transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus.

Otsuka relates to a facsimile apparatus which is linked to a local area network including two or more personal computers and operates on the local area network as a facsimile server for transmission of document files. The *Otsuka* system records the sending history of a user of a facsimile apparatus and only sends password information to the facsimile apparatus and not to a reception station of the document files. In the *Otsuka* system, there are three types of devices, namely, a source station (one of a plurality of personal computers and/or an external station), a facsimile apparatus 50, and one of a plurality of reception devices.

Nothing has been found in *Otsuka* that would teach or suggest input means for inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination by the determination means where the determination means determines whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user, and the control means for controlling transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus, as recited in Claim 1.

The Office Action cites *Otsuka* at column 11, lines 5-20, and in particular lines 13-16, as disclosing structure equivalent to the input means of Claim 1. Applicant disagrees. The cited passage merely discusses a log-in procedure to start a computer session, where the log-in procedure requests a user to enter a user name on a source station. However, nothing has been found in *Otsuka* that would teach or suggest input means for inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination by the determination means where the determination means determines whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user, as recited in Claim 1.

The Office Action cites column 13, lines 10-15, of *Otsuka* as disclosing structure equivalent to the control means of Claim 1. The cited passage merely discusses receiving a document from the source station via a concentrator 40, and storing the document file in the facsimile apparatus. *Otsuka*, however, fails to teach or suggest controlling transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming

apparatus, in accordance with the received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus, as recited in Claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Applicant submits that Claim 1 is clearly patentable over *Otsuka*, taken alone.

Yokoyama, which is cited as teaching that a computer can be modified into an image reading apparatus, is not seen to remedy the deficiencies of *Otsuka*. In particular, *Yokoyama* fails to disclose (a) the input means inputting the management information in accordance with a result of the determination by the determination means where the determination means determines whether or not the selected image forming apparatus requests input of management information relating to a user, and (b) the control means controlling transmission of the generated image signal to the selected image forming apparatus, in accordance with the received result of the authentication of the transmitted management information from the selected image forming apparatus, as recited in Claim 1.

Applicants therefore submit that a combination of *Otsuka* and *Yokoyama*, assuming such combination would even be permissible, also would fail to teach or suggest at least those features of Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is patentable over the *Otsuka* and *Yokoyama*, whether considered separately or in combination.

Independent Claims 6 and 15 are method and computer-readable memory claims respectively corresponding to apparatus Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable over *Otsuka* and *Yokoyama* for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

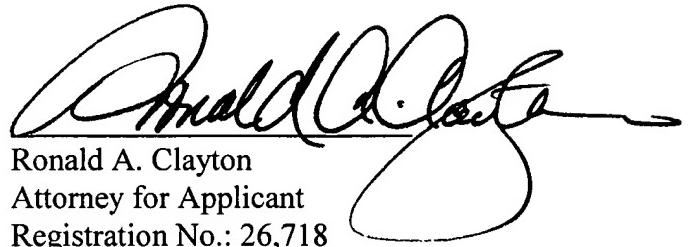
The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Action is believed clearly to place this application in condition for allowance and, therefore, its entry is believed proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment After Final Action, as an earnest effort to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact Applicant's undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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